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1st Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT
99-12

PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER

FEBRUARY 28, 1985.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

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Mr. HALL of Ohio, from the Committee on Rules, submitted the following

REPORT

together with

MINORITY VIEWS

[To accompany H. Res. 20]

The Committee on Rules, having had under consideration House Resolution 20, by voice vote, report the same to the House with the recommendation that the resolution do pass.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

House Resolution 20 would establish for the 99th Congress the Select Committee on Hunger in the House of Representatives. The select committee would consist of seventeen members and be charged with studying the panoply of issues related to hunger—in the U.S. and abroad—and recommending to the relevant standing committees of the House legislative solutions to the persisting hunger problem.

House Resolution 20 was introduced by Representative Leland, who served as chairman of the Select Committee on Hunger in the 98th Congress, on January 3, 1985. The resolution's original cosponsors included all of the returning Members who served on the select committee in 1984.

UNICEF estimates that 15 million people worldwide die each year from hunger-related causes. According to the World Bank 800 million people around the globe live in a condition of "absolute poverty"—a condition in which they have insufficient income to provide themselves with a minimally adequate diet. These statistics persist in spite of the dramatic improvements which have been

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seen in the health of citizens in Third World nations. Life expectancy in less developed countries has increased by about 40 percent since 1950 and the child death rate has fallen by about half indicating that—while much remains to be done—great strides have been made in improving the quality of life for the world's poor. Projections estimate that the world's population will continue to expand from the current 4.8 billion to reach 6.2 billion by the year 2000. Clearly such an expansion will only make worse the serious world hunger problem we now face and requires determined study and planning.

In the United States hunger is also prevalent among the poor and has recently appeared to be on the rise. The Census Bureau estimated that 15.2 percent of our nation's population is living in poverty which is up from 13 percent in 1980 and is the highest percentage since 1965. The most apparent cause of this increase is the economic recession which peaked during 1982 and from which many of the economically disadvantaged have yet to recover. A 1983 investigation by the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition revealed that emergency feeding centers had experienced a dramatic surge in demand for their services—in some cases up by 400 percent over the course of a year. Without appropriate government and community response, the rise in the poverty level threatens to undercut major advances which were made during the 1970s in reducing hunger-related illnesses and deaths in this country.

While the Federal response to international and domestic hunger is clearly effective in reducing deaths and in improving the health of beneficiaries, it has been some time since workable proposals have been brought forth to supplement long-standing programs to benefit the hundreds of millions who still suffer. There are at least eight standing committees in the House which are charged with jurisdiction over the various aspects of the hunger issue yet there is no single and unified body of members which is constituted for the sole purpose of studying hunger and its causes and providing legislative proposals to deal with them. The eight committees are:

Agriculture: Agriculture generally, especially agricultural production and domestic commodities distribution, human nutrition, and rural development.

Appropriations: Funding for food and nutrition programs generally.

Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs: Congregate housing services program and programs relating to international credit development.

Education and Labor: Food programs for children in schools, nutrition programs for the elderly, and the WIC program.

Foreign Affairs: United Nations organizations concerning hunger, food, and development, development assistance, and measures relating to international economic policy.

Government Operations: Interrelationships between Federal Government organizations administering food and nutrition programs.

Interior and Insular Affairs: American Indian nutrition programs.

Ways and Means: Reciprocal trade agreements.

The Select Committee on Hunger would have clear authority and responsibility for presenting solutions to hunger in the nation and the world. The select committee would have no legislative functions. Its role would be to develop meaningful policy proposals to deal with the issue of hunger in all of its aspects. Without such a select committee, the House will have to continue to attempt to deal with the problem of hunger in a disjointed manner. Reestablishment of the select committee would allow the House to consider in one forum the diverse issues related to hunger and deal with solutions in a comprehensive and informed atmosphere. The overwhelming support which House Resolution 15 received in the 98th Congress is indicative of the desire on the part of the nation for Congress to get serious about ending world hunger.

House Resolution 20 was introduced in the House on January 3, 1985. The measure has been cosponsored by 209 Members of the House.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE DURING THE 98TH CONGRESS

During the 98th Congress the House of Representatives established a Select Committee on Hunger when it adopted House Resolution 15 on February 22, 1984 by a record vote of 309–78. On May 1, the select committee adopted its rules for the second session of the 98th Congress. To expedite its consideration of the issues relating to hunger, the select committee divided itself into two task forces—the International Task Force and the Domestic Task Force—which were chaired by Representative Tony Hall and Representative Leon Panetta respectively.

While the select committee was not able to begin full-scale operations until after the first of April, 1984, it did hold a number of important hearings and briefings by the end of the 98th Congress. The select committee held hearings in California and Mississippi, as well as in Washington. Hearing topics included a discussion of the effectiveness and accessibility of domestic hunger relief programs and the specific problems being faced in dealing with the devastating drought in Ethiopia and much of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. A number of the select committee's members travelled to Ethiopia in order to view firsthand the tragedy of the famine there and the international effort that has been mobilized in hopes of ending the crisis. The findings of members who visited that country led to the diversion to Ethiopia of a grain shipment destined for India, averting what would have been a disastrous gap in emergency food deliveries there.

As and addendum to its 1984 Progress Report, the select committee included a staff resource paper titled "Information for Future Study of Programs which Alleviate Hunger and Malnutrition." The paper is a wide-ranging exploration of the issues surrounding hunger and its treatment. The study is an important resource product and will serve as a useful starting point for the select committee's work in the 99th Congress.

QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO THE REPORT "GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEES"

In February, 1983, the Subcommittee on the Legislative Process of the Committee on Rules revised and reissued a report first released in 1977 entitled "Guidelines for the Establishment of Select Committees." The Report recommends that, in order for the Rules Committee to have the fullest information possible regarding the role and purposes of a proposed select committee, a questionnaire be prepared by the Member sponsoring the establishing resolution specifically describing the purposes for which the select committee is to be established. In compliance with that recommendation, Representative Leland has submitted answers to the questions contained in the Report's model questionnaire. Since several of the questions are designed for select committees that are to be newly established and the answers to those questions, with regard to the Select Committee on Hunger, are already part of the public record, Representative Leland's responses are to those questions which are relevant to the debate regarding the select committee's reestablishment.

The appropriate questions and Representative Leland's responses, which were contained in a letter dated February 22, 1985, are reprinted below:

1. What standing committees may have jurisdiction over the subject matter of the proposed select committee?

"Standing committees with jurisdiction over the subject matter of the Select Committee on Hunger include: Agriculture; Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs; Education and Labor; Foreign Affairs; Government Operations; Interior and Insular Affairs; and Ways and Means."

2. What justification exists for the subject to be investigated by a select committee instead of by one or more of the standing committees?

"The standing committees which share jurisdiction over the subject matter on which the Select Committee focuses can only look at a small part of the problem. Prior to the creation of the Select Committee, there was no single agency or congressional committee which concentrated on the broad range of issues raised by the hunger problem. The Select Committee provides the avenue for a comprehensive, unfragmented examination of the hunger problems prevailing both here in the United States and abroad."

3. Will the proposed select committee require the power to subpoena witnesses and/or documents?

"The Select Committee will not require the power to subpoena witnesses and/or documents."

4. What number and type of staffing is anticipated for the proposed select committee?

"The staff of the Select Committee will be limited in number, placing emphasis on professionals who are able to operate with minimum supervision. The number of full-time staff positions will not exceed 16 in 1985. Of these positions, 12 will be professional and 4 will be clerical. The

budget will include an allocation for specialist consultants (e.g., nutritionists, economists, and development assistance analysts) who can be engaged on a project basis. In addition, efforts will be made to utilize the expertise of individuals from standing committees and federal agencies to facilitate the development of a comprehensive view of individual projects in question. The rules of the House will be used to determine the ratio of majority to minority staff, excepting that a portion of the administrative staff would be considered outside the ratio since they will be serving the entire Committee. Finally, the Select Committee will accept interns where appropriate and available—one such position to be stipend and the remaining to be on a gratis basis."

5. What type of travel is anticipated (domestic and/or overseas)? If overseas travel is anticipated, what is the justification for granting such authority?

"It is anticipated that the Select Committee will be required to travel both within the boundaries of the United States and abroad. In that the problems of hunger are global in nature, this travel would permit the Select Committee members to acquire a comprehensive view of the multidimensional and interdependent aspects of the hunger issue."

6. What is the estimate of total cost for the operation of the proposed select committee?

"It is estimated that the annual cost of operating the Select Committee will be $652,513."

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

House Resolution 20 would establish the Select Committee on Hunger to consist of seventeen members to be appointed by the Speaker. Delegates and the Resident Commissioner of the House would be eligible to serve on the select committee. One of the members would be appointed by the Speaker to chair the select committee. Subject to adoption in the House of a separate resolution providing for the select committee's expenses, the select committee would have the authority to hire staff and consultants and to reimburse members of the select committee for travel expenses incurred by them in carrying out their duties as members of the committee. House Resolution 20 requires the select committee to submit an annual report to the House including a summary of its activities during the year. Any files, records and materials accumulated by the select committee are to be transferred to the Clerk of the House at the end of the Congress.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1—Establishment

Establishes the Select Committee on Hunger.

Section 2—Functions

Subsection (a) sets forth the functions of the select committee. The select committee would have no legislative jurisdiction but would have the authority—

To conduct a continuing comprehensive study and review of the problems of hunger and malnutrition, including but not limited to, those issues addressed in the reports of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger and the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, which issues include—

The United States development and economic assistance program and the executive branch structure responsible for administering the program,

World food security,

Trade relations between the United States and less developed countries,

Food production and distribution,

Corporate and agribusiness efforts to further international development,

Policies of multilateral development banks and international development institutions, and

Food assistance programs in the United States.

To review any recommendations made by the President, or by any department or agency of the executive branch of the Federal Government, relating to programs or policies affecting hunger or malnutrition; and

To recommend to the appropriate committees of the House legislation or other action the select committee considers necessary with respect to programs or policies affecting hunger or malutrition.

Subsection (b) provides that the resolution should not be construed to limit the legislative and oversight jurisdiction of any standing committee. This is clarifying language which emphasizes the primary responsibility of the standing committees of the House over the subject area to be addressed by the select committee.

Section 3—Appointment and membership

Subsection (a) provides that the Speaker would appoint 17 Members of the House to the select committee, and would designate one as chairman.

Subsection (b) specifies that any vacancy would be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

Subsection (c) provides that, for the purposes of appointing members to the select committee, the term "Members" includes any Representative, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner in the House of Representatives.

Section 4—Authority and procedures

Subsection (a) provides the customary authority to the select committee to sit, act, and hold hearings. The authority would be granted without regard to whether the House is in session, has adjourned, or has recessed, and extends geographically throughout the United States, including any U.S. commonwealth or possession

or elsewhere. This language is similar to that which applies to standing committees under clause 2(m)(1)(A) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and would allow the select committee to conduct hearings or investigations outside the United States or its possessions.

Subsection (b) provides that, with one exception, all provisions of clauses 1, 2, and 3 of rule XI of the Rules of the House shall be applicable to the select committee. These provisions relate to rules of procedure for committees, adoption of written rules, committee meetings, committee records, quorum requirements, travel limitations, and broadcasting of committee hearings. The exception, clause 2(m)(1)(B) of rule XI—which grants subpoena power to House committees, would not be applicable to the select committee. By making clauses 1, 2, and 3 applicable to the select committee it is not necessary to delineate quorum requirements which would be guided by clause 2(h) of rule XI.

Subsection (c) makes it clear that nothing contained in subsection (a) shall be construed to limit the applicability of clause 2(i) of rule XI of the Rules of the House to the select committee. The select committee would be prohibited from sitting while the House is considering a measure for amendment under the 5-minute rule. As is the practice with standing committees of the House, the select committee may ask for the permission of the House to sit during the 5-minute rule on a case-by-case basis as necessary.

Section 5—Administrative provisions

Subsection (a) provides authority to the select committee to incur necessary expenses in connection with its duties under this resolution, subject to the adoption of expense resolutions as required by clause 5 of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives. No funds for the activities of the select committee would be available except by a separate vote on a funding resolution reported by the Committee on House Administration.

Subsection (b) authorizes the select committee to appoint such staff and hire experts or consultants as the select committee considers necessary. The select committee would be authorized to utilize the services of the staffs of those committees of the House from which Members have been selected for membership on the select committee. This provision allows the select committee to hire and terminate staff, prescribe their duties, and set the rate of compensation which may not exceed the highest rate of basic pay for level V of the Executive Schedule in section 5316 of title 5, United States Code (currently limited to $68,750 per year). It would also allow the Members and staff to be reimbursed for expenses incurred in travelling outside of the District of Columbia.

Section 6—Reports and records

Subsection (a) requires the select committee to submit an annual report to the House which includes a summary of its activities during the calendar year to which the report applies.

Subsection (b) provides that the report is to be filed with the Clerk of the House in the event that the House is not in session when the report is submitted.

Subsection (c) provides that the records, files, and materials of the select committee are to be transferred to the Clerk of the House upon completion of the select committee's work.

COMMITTEE ACTION

On February 26, 1985, the Committee on Rules held a hearing and markup on the resolution. During the hearing, testimony was heard in support of the resolution from Representatives, Leland, Roukema, and Gilman. The Committee agreed by voice vote, a quorum being present, to report the measure to the House with the recommendation that it be adopted by the House.

STATEMENT UNDER CLAUSE 2(L)(3) OF RULE XI OF THE RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A. Oversight and statement

The Committee made no special oversight findings on this resolution.

B. Budget statement

No budget statement is submitted.

C. Estimate of the Congressional Budget Office

No estimate or comparison was received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office as referred to in subdivision (c) of clause 2(l)(3) of House Rule XI.

D. Oversight findings or recommendations of the Committee on Government Operations

No findings or recommendations of the Committee on Government Operations were received as referred to in subdivision (a) of clause 2(l)(3) of House Rule XI.

MINORITY VIEWS OF THE HONORABLE TRENT LOTT OF MISSISSIPPI ON HOUSE RESOLUTION 20, CREATING A SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER

In 1977, the Rules Committee's Subcommittee on the Rules and Organization of the House, under the able chairmanship of our late colleague, Gillis Long, published a subcommittee print entitled, "Guidelines for the Establishment of Select Committees." The first two of six criteria laid down by the subcommittee in that document were that the proposed select committee "must deal with a significant and major issue," and a showing that "the present committee system does not address the issue effectively.

There can be no question that hunger, particularly world hunger, qualifies as a "significant and major issue" today. But, on the second criterion, there can be no question that our existing committee system is addressing the issue expeditiously and effectively.

Consider the fact that two of the first bills out of committee in this 99th Congress, before some committees had even fully organized, were the African famine relief and recovery authorization, H.R. 1096, reported from the Committee on Foreign Affairs on Feb. 25, 1985 (H. Rept. 99-3); and the urgent supplemental appropriations bill for emergency famine relief and recovery in Africa, H.R. 1239, reported from the Committee on Appropriations on Feb. 21, 1985 (H. Rept. 99-2).

The evidence is also clear that the standing committees of jurisdiction over domestic and world hunger and food assistance were not neglecting those isssues in the 98th Congress. According to its final activity report (H. Rept. 98-1182), the Committee on Foreign Affairs conducted two series of hearings on world hunger in the 98th Congress: the first, in July of 1983, to review progress made towards achieving the goals set by the 1974 World Food Conference (a committee-commissioned study by CRS was later released entitled, "Feeding the World's Population: Developments in the Decade Following the World Food Conference in 1974"); and the second series of hearings in August and September of 1984, held jointly with the Select Committee on Hunger, on the world food situation, with special emphasis on emergency food assistance to Africa and the Ethiopian famine. In addition, the Subcommittee on Africa held a hearing in November of 1983 on the "Food Crisis in Africa," during which it examined not only the areas of immediate and critical concern, but the long-term implications of the food shortage and possible solutions to the crisis.

In addition to these oversight activities, the Foreign Affairs Committee reported major foreign aid authorization bills in both sessions, with substantial sums authorized for nutrition, food and agricultural development assistance (H.R. 2992, H.R. 5119).

On the domestic hunger front, House standing committees were also quite active. The Committee on Agriculture's Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations and Nutrition held 12 hearings during the 98th Congress, including five field hearings, on hunger and nutrition issues and the food stamp and commodity distribution programs under its jurisdiction. The Committee on Agriculture reported the "Hunger Relief Act of 1984," H.R. 5151, a billion-dollar food stamp bill which the House passed on August 1, 1984.

The Committee on Education and Labor was also quite active on the hunger issue in the 98th Congress. Among other things, the committee reported the "Emergency Commodity Distribution Act of 1983" (H.R. 1513), the "Meals for Older Americans Act" (H.R. 2807), and the "National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Act Amendments" (H.R. 4091, and H.R. 7).

It should be clear from this brief and incomplete recitation of hunger-related actions by our standing committees that the issue is far from being ignored. This was the point made in a Nov. 15, 1983, letter from three House Committee chairmen to Chairman Pepper on whether a Select Committee on Hunger should be created in the first place. To quote from that letter from Chairmen Zablocki of Foreign Affairs, Perkins of Education and Labor, and de la Garza of Agriculture:

> We and our committees and relevant subcommittees have been active in this area in the past and continue to be. . . . The question arises, therefore, as to why the House should create another committee to conduct activities in an area already covered by existing committees? Or would creation of this body in fact be counterproductive to the congressional efforts for what we all want, which is the elimination of hunger?

The chairmen went on in their letter to say the following:

> A million dollars will still buy food for a lot of children. Another committee should be established only if its benefits can be clearly demonstrated to outweigh it costs and disadvantages. We are concerned that it is inherently disadvantageous to the House, and in this case to the anti-hunger effort, to have a committee whose purview . . . is entirely duplicative and overlapping of the responsibilities of existing committees under House rules.

While no one should doubt or question the sincerity and dedication of the select committee members in pursuing their inquiry into domestic and world hunger, the fact remains that they are replowing old ground that has been gone over and over not only by our standing committees, but by numerous national committees, commissions, task forces and foundations. The problem has been studied into the ground. There are already volumes of hunger studies containing reams of pages full of charts, graphs, findings and recommendations, collecting dust on miles of shelves around the world. Translating these findings and recommendations into practical, workable and affordable solutions should be the next step taken by our governmental and private institutions.

Spending an additional $1.3 million in the 99th Congress to continue a select committee to further investigate the problem of hunger will not produce miracle grains or desert rains. Such money would be better spent on putting food in the mouths of the hungry than on traversing the globe to study the faces of hunger.

TRENT LOTT.

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